



Designation: F3196 – 18

Standard Practice for Seeking Approval for Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) Operations¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation F3196; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reappraisal. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reappraisal.

1. Scope

1.1 Compliance with this practice is recommended as one means of seeking approval from a civil aviation authority (CAA) to operate a small unmanned aircraft system (sUAS) beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS). Any regulatory application of this practice to sUAS and other unmanned aircraft systems (UASs) is at the discretion of the appropriate CAA.

1.2 *Units*—The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to SI units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

1.3 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.4 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

NOTE 1—For requirements in these standards that are specified to be adequate, the applicant/proponent shall propose and obtain approval of the specifics of that requirement from the CAA.

[F2908 Specification for Unmanned Aircraft Flight Manual \(UFM\) for an Unmanned Aircraft System \(UAS\)](#)

[F2909 Practice for Maintenance and Continued Airworthiness of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(sUAS\)](#)

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F38 on Unmanned Aircraft Systems and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F38.02 on Flight Operations.

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

- [F2910 Specification for Design and Construction of a Small Unmanned Aircraft System \(sUAS\)](#)
- [F2911 Practice for Production Acceptance of Small Unmanned Aircraft System \(sUAS\)](#)
- [F3002 Specification for Design of the Command and Control System for Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(sUAS\)](#)
- [F3003 Specification for Quality Assurance of a Small Unmanned Aircraft System \(sUAS\)](#)
- [F3005 Specification for Batteries for Use in Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(sUAS\)](#)
- [F3178 Practice for Operational Risk Assessment of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(sUAS\)](#)
- [F3201 Practice for Ensuring Dependability of Software Used in Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\)](#)
- [F3206 Guide for Training for Remote Pilot in Command of Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\) Endorsement](#)
- [F3269 Practice for Methods to Safely Bound Flight Behavior of Unmanned Aircraft Systems Containing Complex Functions](#)
- [F3298 Specification for Design, Construction, and Verification of Fixed-Wing Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\)](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.1.1 *applicant/proponent, n*—the person or organization responsible for seeking the approval to operate or the person or organization operating an sUAS, or both. The applicant/proponent may be one of the following entities:

3.1.1.1 *manufacturer, n*—the person or organization who causes production of a product or article. A manufacturer may also be an operator.

3.1.1.2 *operator, n*—the person or organization that applies for CAA approval to operate an sUAS or who seeks operational approval for types of flight operations prohibited by a CAA for that sUAS.

3.1.1.3 *original equipment manufacturer; OEM, n*—the person or organization who first produced that particular product or article. An OEM may also be an operator.

3.1.2 *beyond visual line of sight, BVLOS*—operation when the individual responsible for controlling the flight of the sUA cannot maintain direct unaided (other than by corrective lenses or sunglasses, or both) visual contact with the sUA, other

aircraft, terrain, adverse weather, or obstacles to determine whether the sUA endangers life or property or both.

3.1.3 *beyond visual line of sight (extended), BVLOS (E)*—operation when the sUA cannot be seen by the individuals responsible for see-and-avoid with unaided (other than by corrective lenses or sunglasses, or both) vision but where the location of the sUA is known through technological means without exceeding the performance capabilities of the C2 link.

3.1.3.1 *Discussion*—Either the RPIC or, alternatively, the VO can use said technological means for determining the location of the sUA to determine its movement relative to intruding aircraft, obstacles, adverse weather, terrain; observe the airspace for other air traffic or hazards; and determine whether the sUA endangers life or property or both. To further clarify, technology means can be used to determine the position of the sUAS but the RPIC or the VO must be able to see the area the sUAS is known to be in so as to execute the required see-and-avoid function. If the technology means used to determine the position of the sUA fails, an appropriate maneuver shall be executed in a timely manner to ensure flight safety.

3.1.4 *command and control (C2) link(s), n*—radio-frequency link(s) between the control station and the unmanned aircraft (UA), also known as the control and non-payload communications (CNPC) link(s).

3.1.5 *control station, n*—interface used by the Remote Pilot in Command (RPIC) or remote pilot to control the flight path of the sUA.

3.1.6 *crew member, n*—person charged with duties essential to the operation of an sUAS during a flight duty period.

3.1.7 *fly-away, n*—unintentional flight outside of operational boundaries (altitude/airspeed/lateral limits) as the result of a failure, interruption, or degradation of the control station or onboard systems, or both.

3.1.8 *fly-away protection system, n*—system that will safely recover the sUA, or keep the sUA within the intended operational area, in the event of a fly-away as defined in 3.1.7.

3.1.9 *licensed band, n*—any frequency or range of frequencies in which transmission requires permission from a governing body (for example, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission).

3.1.10 *remote pilot, n*—the RPIC or person other than the RPIC who is controlling the flight of an sUA under the supervision of the RPIC.

3.1.11 *remote pilot in command, RPIC, n*—person who is directly responsible for and is the final authority as to the operation of the sUAS; has been designated as remote pilot in command before or during the flight of an sUAS; and holds the appropriate CAA certificate for the conduct of the flight.

3.1.12 *see-and-avoid, v*—use of the visual capability of a person to identify intruding aircraft so that the sUA can be maneuvered and the safe conduct of the flight can be maintained.

3.1.13 *sense-and-avoid, v*—use of a sensor system to identify intruding aircraft so that the sUA can be maneuvered and the safe conduct of the flight can be maintained.

3.1.14 *shall versus should versus may, v*—use of the word “shall” means that a procedure or statement is mandatory and must be followed to comply with this practice, “should” means recommended, and “may” means optional at the discretion of the applicant/proponent.

3.1.14.1 *Discussion*—“Shall” statements are requirements and they include sufficient detail needed to define compliance (for example, threshold values, test methods, oversight, and reference to other standards). “Should” statements are provided as guidance towards the overall goal of improving safety and could include only subjective statements. “Should” statements also represent parameters that could be used in safety evaluations or could lead to development of future requirements, or both. “May” statements are provided to clarify acceptability of a specific item or practice and offer options for satisfying requirements.

3.1.15 *small unmanned aircraft, sUA, n*—unmanned aircraft weighing less than 55 lb (25 kg) on takeoff, including everything that is on board or otherwise attached to the aircraft.

3.1.16 *small unmanned aircraft system, sUAS, n*—small unmanned aircraft and its associated elements (including communication links and the components that control the sUA) that are required for the safe and efficient operation of the sUA in a national airspace system.

3.1.17 *unmanned aircraft, UA, n*—aircraft operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft.

3.1.18 *visual line of sight, VLOS, n*—operations with vision that is unaided other than by corrective lenses or sunglasses, or both, where the remote pilot or visual observer shall be able to see the sUA throughout the entire flight to determine its movement relative to intruding aircraft, obstacles, adverse weather, terrain; observe the airspace for other air traffic or hazards; and determine whether the sUA endangers life or property or both.

3.1.19 *visual observer, VO, n*—person who is designated by the RPIC to assist the RPIC or the remote pilot, or both, to see the sUA throughout the entire flight to determine its movement relative to intruding aircraft, obstacles, terrain; observe the airspace for other air traffic or hazards; and determine whether the sUA endangers life or property or both.

3.2 Acronyms:

3.2.1 *BVLOS*—beyond visual line of sight.

3.2.2 *BVLOS (E)*—beyond visual line of sight (extended).

3.2.3 *CAA*—civil aviation authority.

3.2.4 *C2*—command and control.

3.2.5 *CNPC*—control and non-payload communications.

3.2.6 *CONOPS*—concept of operations.

3.2.7 *OEM*—original aircraft manufacturer.

3.2.8 *ORA*—operational risk assessment.

3.2.9 *RPIC*—remote pilot in command.

3.2.10 *SDO*—standards development organization.

3.2.11 *sUAS*—small unmanned aircraft system.

3.2.12 *sUA*—small unmanned aircraft.

- 3.2.13 *UA*—unmanned aircraft.
- 3.2.14 *UAS*—unmanned aircraft system.
- 3.2.15 *UFM*—unmanned aircraft flight manual.
- 3.2.16 *VLOS*—visual line of sight.
- 3.2.17 *VO*—visual observer.

risk mitigations for the sUAS (see Section 8) may be required to ensure an acceptable level of risk.

F2908	Specification for Unmanned Aircraft Flight Manual (UFM) for an Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS)
F2909	Practice for Maintenance and Continued Airworthiness of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS)
F2910	Specification for Design and Construction of a Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS)
F2911	Practice for Production Acceptance of Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS)
F3002	Specification for Design of the Command and Control System for Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS)
F3003	Specification for Quality Assurance of a Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS)
F3005	Specification for Batteries for Use in Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems
F3201	Practice for Ensuring Dependability of Software Used in Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)
F3266	Guide for Training for Remote Pilot in Command of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Endorsement Standard for sUAS operations over people published by a SDO—Only required if EVLOS or BVLOS operations or both are proposed to be flown over people. See Related Materials section for ASTM Work Item on this topic. Standard for design, construction, and verification of a vertical takeoff and landing sUAS published by a SDO. See Related Materials section for ASTM Work Item on this topic.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This practice is written for all sUAS seeking permission to operate BVLOS (E) or BVLOS, or both, in airspace authorized by a CAA.

4.2 It is assumed that the maximum weight, altitude, and airspeed of an sUAS will be specified by a CAA. However, unless otherwise specified by a nation's CAA, this practice applies to sUA that:

4.2.1 Have a maximum takeoff gross weight of less than 55 lb (25 kg), including everything that is on board or otherwise attached to the aircraft, and

4.2.2 Are remotely piloted (that is, flown without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft).

5. Procedure

5.1 The following steps are recommended to seek operational approval to fly an sUAS at BVLOS (E) or BVLOS, or both. Details of each step are provided in the following paragraphs:

5.1.1 If required by the CAA, the applicant/proponent shall define the sUA system. See Section 6 for minimum requirements.

5.1.2 The applicant/proponent shall define the CONOPS. See Section 7 for minimum requirements.

5.1.3 The applicant/proponent shall perform an ORA for the total system and a proposed CONOPS which identifies proposed mitigation strategies including technology, design characteristics, training, operational requirements/limitations or procedures, or combinations thereof, for the identified hazards. See Sections 7 and 8 for minimum requirements.

5.1.4 If required to do so by the CAA, the applicant/proponent shall present results of 5.1.1 – 5.1.3 to the CAA and then refine them until it is jointly determined that risks associated with system design and the proposed operation are acceptable.

5.1.5 If required to do so by the CAA, the applicant/proponent shall work with the CAA or CAA-approved test organizations, or both, to verify that the final system and mitigation strategies meet the agreed-to requirements.

5.1.6 The operator shall obtain operational approval from the CAA.

6. System Requirements

6.1 If required to do so by the CAA, the operational and airworthiness design requirements in the current versions of the following standards shall, at a minimum, be complied with by any sUAS flown BVLOS (E) or BVLOS, or both. These requirements are necessary but may not be sufficient for all BVLOS (E) or BVLOS operations. Depending on the system and CONOPS proposed by the applicant/proponent, additional

7. Operational Risk Assessment (ORA) and Concept of Operation (CONOPS)

7.1 An ORA and CONOPS shall be completed by the applicant/proponent in accordance with Practice F3178 for Operational Risk Assessment (ORA) for an sUAS.

7.2 In addition to any hazards identified in the above published ORA standard for an sUAS, hazards specific to either BVLOS (E) or BVLOS operations shall also be included in the ORA.

8. Risk Mitigation Strategies

8.1 Since it is anticipated that each system and CONOPS will vary considerably, specific risk mitigation strategies and details shall be proposed by the applicant/proponent to the CAA for the hazards identified in the ORA. Examples of various types of potential risk mitigation strategies follow. Note that these potential risk mitigation strategies are options that could be proposed to the CAA for consideration—they are not requirements. See 8.2 for references to specific best practices for both BVLOS (E) and BVLOS operations that may also be proposed to the CAA for consideration. As more details on acceptable risk mitigation strategies become available, these may be included in future standards or appendixes to this practice.

8.1.1 *Examples of Design or sUAS Characteristics, or Both:*

8.1.1.1 For BVLOS (E) operations, use an onboard telemetry system or other effective means of determining location and, where applicable, altitude, speed, heading, and ground track (either ground based or onboard the sUA) that ensures the RPIC or VO, or both, know the location of the sUA so that they can maintain situation awareness (that is, traffic, terrain, obstacles, and weather) of the airspace in which the sUA operation is being conducted. This allows the VO, in conjunction with the RPIC, to perform the see-and-avoid function for BVLOS (E) operations.

8.1.1.2 For BVLOS operations, use an onboard telemetry system or other effective means (either ground based or